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President's Corner
By Tom Strikwerda

Challenges

Just what does an MOS president do? I've been your president for several months and it becomes clearer to me every day. There are the usual longer-term items such as filling committee chairs but there are much more challenging or interesting tasks that keep me busy. Thanks to a dedicated board and other long-term MOS members providing information, help and guidance, we resolve these. At times they may seem a bit removed from our main interest in birding but, at the same time, they demonstrate that MOS is a viable and vibrant organization with a larger vision and community. I thought I'd share with you a few of these more unusual items that the board is working on these days, either at the Executive Council or the full board level. Here's a sampling of some recent actions to give you a flavor of recent activities that go on behind the scenes.

As some of you may remember, our newest sanctuary is Piscataway in Prince Georges County, donated by a developer to MOS several years ago. Piscataway is our only sanctuary in PG County and represents a good block of mature woodlands in the midst of a rapidly developing area of the state. The developer now wishes to buy an easement across Piscataway for a sewer line so they can continue development of their remaining property. And as a separate action on this property, the developer would like MOS to abandon an old access easement in exchange for improving access to the sanctuary via another route and adding other amenities such as a pavilion. As far as I know, this type of action is a "first" for MOS and a challenge for our Board. We're currently learning, seeking legal advice, and negotiating; we'll have more information in coming months.

Recently MOS was contacted by an author and photographer who wish to collaborate with us on a book about birds of Maryland, Delaware and the District of Columbia. The proposed book will be focused on the casual birder and outdoor enthusiast. MOS would sponsor the book, collect donations from several large donors sought by the authors, and provide payments to the authors at the appropriate times. This project will be a great outreach for MOS. Again, stand by for more information in the months ahead.

We continue to explore and expand the use of PayPal for paying the conference and dues. Last spring we successfully tested registering a handful of "guinea pigs" for our 2014 conference in Solomons. Registrants went to a 3rd party website to select a particular plan and then paid for registration via PayPal. The results and feedback were quite favorable, but we'd like to find a lower cost method than using the 3rd party website, including using our own website to collect the information. And, if you would like to make a donation to MOS you may now do it via PayPal linked directly from the MOS website. In addition, Members-at-Large may pay their dues via PayPal on our website. We hope to expand use of PayPal for dues to at least several chapters in the future and will keep you posted on that progress. If you'd like to help with this project and know something about collecting information via a webpage please contact me or John Christy, our webmaster.

And one email out of the blue led to an event that didn't

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require much work and led to an enjoyable Sunday morning for a few members. Have you heard of "Ray Brown's Talkin' Birds" radio program? This weekly program is out of Boston and celebrated its 500th show by broadcasting from the Smithsonian. Several MOS members were able to attend. I've written a short note about the live broadcast in this issue.

This is a brief summary of challenges that keep me busy – and away from birding! I hope that, with your help, we can be successful and move these projects forward and continue MOS's role as a vibrant, meaningful organization. And I believe all can consistent with MOS's charter and mission.

2015 MOS Conference

May 15 – 17

Clarion Hotel and Hager Hall Conference and Event Center
Hagerstown, MD

The Annual Conference is fast approaching. You should receive your registration brochure sometime in January or certainly by February. It will also be posted online. You may be pleased to see that the costs for this part of the state are somewhat lower than in the more populated areas. We've been busy getting ready, and it's shaping up to be an interesting, exciting, and, of course, fun conference.

Considering the diversity of wonderful birding sites, participants may have difficulty choosing their field trips! Although I'm still on the hook as Field Trip Coordinator (feel free to volunteer!), I have the able assistance of Montgomery Bird Club's Jim Green, who says Washington Co. has some of his favorite birding places. Jim will plan locations, prepare descriptions of the trips, and set up the skeleton schedule. Then we'll need lots of volunteer leaders to finish the job. We're seeking trip leaders who know Maryland's birds and also local guides who know the territory. If you are willing to lead a field trip, but don't know the area, we'll assign a local guide to assist you. Please contact me (Maureen) to volunteer.

If we have night trips (how could we not?), we'll ask you to sign up in advance. This will happen after registrations are in. If he's willing, Dave Webb will use his computer-based lottery system for night trip sign-ups. All the names are entered and random choices will be made for each night trip. This system worked quite well in 2012 and 2013.

There are always interesting items available at both the Silent Auction and Raffle; you never know what you will find. Proceeds will be divided between Project Owlnet's Lamb's Knoll Banding Station and Beaver Creek Watershed Association. Please contact Maryanne Dolan (secretary@mdbirds.org, 202-733-5204) to offer your help. This could be accepting items and setting up on Friday, or taking a turn in the room while it's open, or enticing folks to purchase raffle tickets during meals. Your donations are always welcome, too, and don't forget to buy your raffle tickets!

Maryanne Dolan has also put together a pair of fantastic workshops for us. As always, you will sign up in advance for the workshops when you fill out your registration form. Sean McCandless has taken over for Mark Johnson, whose son is graduating that weekend, to lead the warbler ID workshop. This workshop will be held Friday afternoon in a room large enough for 60 participants. There will be a follow-up field trip Saturday, but it will be limited to 15 participants. Never fear, you'll have plenty of opportunities to test your new skills because many of the field trips will be to lovely, lively warbler habitat. On Saturday morning, Ikumi Kayama will demonstrate and teach sketching. For those who sign up, Ikumi will provide a list of suggested sketching materials to bring, or if requested, she will provide the supplies at her cost (estimated $20 to $30). The sketching class will be limited to 15 participants.

Our Friday evening keynote speaker will be Tim Schreckengost, Master's Degree candidate in Wildlife Ecology at University of Delaware. He will talk to MOS about the use of radar to assess landbird migration and the importance of identifying critical stopover habitats to conserve migratory landbird populations.

You may wish to contact our nature store managers, Dave & Claire Horvath (Mother Nature's Store in Columbia, 410-381-4351) before the conference if you have something you particularly wish to see (especially if it's optics) to ask if they can bring it.

Contact me with any questions. Hope to see you at our Hagerstown Conference!

Maureen Harvey
Acting Conference Chair
410-795-3117
pastpres@mdbirds.org

Will There Be a 2016 MOS Conference?

Dear MOS Members,

Please consider whether or not you wish to have an MOS Conference in 2016. If your answer is "YES INDEED I DO" then you need to volunteer to make it happen!

Open positions that must be filled:
- Conference Coordinator
- Field Trip Coordinator
- Silent Auction & Raffle Coordinator

Would your chapter be willing to serve these functions for 2016?

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Or 2017? Chapter presidents, please discuss this with your chapter officers and members.

The first thing needed for 2016 is a contract with a facility that can provide accommodations, meals, meeting rooms, and ample parking. Past experience indicates that venues fill up quickly, and it is best to have a signed contract in hand by mid-January 2015.

Your 2015 Conference Team will be glad to advise and assist, but we can no longer do the whole thing.

Sincerely,
Maureen Harvey, Acting Conference Coordinator
Maryanne Dolan, Acting Silent Auction & Raffle Coordinator

It's not too late! Space is still available for the Duck Workshop – Ocean City

February 6-7, 2015

The State-wide Education Committee will hold a duck workshop in Ocean City, Maryland, on February 6 and 7, 2015. Mikey Lutmerding will lead our workshop with a lecture on ducks of the mid-Atlantic region on Friday evening, February 6, starting at 7 p.m. There will be a light supper beginning at 6:00 p.m. Saturday morning, February 7th, we will practice our newly acquired skills in a field trip. The workshop ends at noon with a round-up of species seen.

All this will happen at the Holiday Inn Oceanfront, 6600 Coastal Highway, Ocean City, Maryland. The Holiday Inn will offer ocean front rooms at $74 a night. They will honor that rate if you wish to stay over Saturday night and make a weekend of the event. For reservations at the hotel, please call 1 800-837-3588. Mention you are with MOS to get the discounted rate.

To reserve a space at the workshop, send a check in the amount of $20 (per person) made payable to MOS, and send it to Maryanne Dolan, 1705 Lanier Place NW, Apt 306, Washington, DC 20009. Please make sure a contact telephone number and/or an email address is included. If you have any questions, give me a call at (202) 733-5204, or via email at Maryanne.dolan@gmail.com. Space is limited to the first 20 participants to sign up.

We had a similar workshop two years ago and everyone had a wonderful time. February in Ocean City is prime time for ducks. We had killer looks at long-tailed ducks two years ago, as well as a nice assortment of dabblers. Don't miss this great opportunity.

Maryanne Dolan
Chair, State-wide Education Committee

ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY

Smithsonian Art exhibit explores what birds can tell us about ourselves.

The Smithsonian American Art Museum, 8th and F St. N.W., Washington, D. C. is exhibiting *The Singing and the Silence: Birds in Contemporary Art* until February 22, 2015. The exhibit highlights artwork that presents birds as allegories for our earthbound existence. The exhibition explores how artists working today employ bird imagery as a conduit for understanding contemporary culture. In the work of the 12 selected artists and their 46 artworks, birds are complex symbols that mirror back to us different facets of our own behavior, habits and values. The exhibit asks viewers to consider what birds can tell us about ourselves, examining our changing connections with the natural world, the ways in which birds symbolize our impulses to both conquer and conserve nature, and how searching for and identifying birds has become an almost sacred ritual in our secular society.

While artists historically have created images of birds for purposes of scientific inquiry, taxonomy or spiritual symbolism, the exhibit features artwork that comes from a common interest by artists in birds as inspiration for exploring humans' earthbound existence. The artworks deal with themes such a contemporary culture's evolving relationship with the natural world, the steady rise in environmental consciousness, and the rituals of birding.

"At its core, this exhibition is about what birds tell us about ourselves and our connection to our planet," comments curator Joanna Marsh. "Together the works create a collective portrait of our own species as informed by our relationship with birds."

There are free public programs presented at the Smithsonian American Art Museum in conjunction with the exhibit. On Tuesday, January 13, 2015 at 6 p.m., curator Marsh and Pete Marra, head of the Migratory Bird Center at the Smithsonian's National Zoological Park will explore the overlap between art and nature during a gallery talk in the exhibition. On Tuesday, February 3, 2015 at 6 p.m. curator Marsh will moderate a discussion with 3 artists whose work is represented in the exhibition discussing their work and creative process. Details about additional upcoming programs will be available on the Museum's calendar, americanart.si.edu/calendar *Joy Chambers*

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CAROLINE COUNTY

Caroline County Bird Club held its very first Big Sit on a rainy October 11, 2014 from 7:30 am - 6:30 pm at the gazebo by the lake at Tuckahoe State Park, Ridgely, MD. Park Manager John Ohler and his staff allowed bird club members early and late access to the park. Seasonal Ranger of the park and bird club member *Dave Reinecke* chose the location and created our circle. Despite the cold, rainy weather, our total species count was 51! *Debby Bennett*

CECIL COUNTY

On October 9th club members *Kristi Eisenberg, Donn Birdsall, Pat Valdata, Susan Peterson* and *Ken Drier* were in Cape May being lead on a private bird walk with recently retired Pete Dunne, the former director of the Cape May Bird Observatory. Kristi at one time had taught Pete English and he had recently looked her up and reached out. The day started with a couple of hours at the Hawk Watch platform. Peregrines, Merlin, Northern Harriers, Broadwings and Sharpies were but a few of the birds flying that day. The official Hawk Watch count for the day was 1810 with over 1000 Sharpies. In the pond in front of the platform the group found a Eurasian Wigeon. Moving to the Meadows area a Virginia Rail was seen in the marsh. Black Scoters were close to shore and Greater Yellowlegs were wading in a pool. The time spent with Pete at the hawk watch and the meadows tallied 78 species of birds for the group. It was a very neat morning spent listening to Pete Dunne's stories and comments as well as learning from his vast experience of field knowledge.

On Saturday November 8th The Cecil Bird Club set up their informational table at the Conowingo Dam for the second annual Eagle Day Event sponsored by Exelon. A crisp cool sunny fall day made for perfect eagle watching. Tri-State Bird Rescue, Plumpton Park Zoo and Hartford Land Trust were a few of the other local organizations represented at the event. In only its second year Eagle Day has already become wildly popular. Over 600 people attended. The food truck sold everything it had and left early. Eagles ruled the day and put on good shows flying over the Susquehanna River and up on to the power line towers. A good day was had by all.

Club members *Kimberleigh* and *Ken Drier* will be heading off to India and Nepal at the end of November. Though not a birding trip per se the group will be staying in Ranthambore National Park, the largest tiger reserve in the county. At one time it was the private hunting preserve of the maharajas. There will be a stop by Bhagalpur - Keoladeo Ghana National Park which is an international birding hotspot with a list of over 350 birds. The Maharaja of Bharatpur commissioned a series of canals and ponds to collect the monsoon rains to create this again private hunting reserve. While in Nepal they will be staying in the Gokarna Forest Resort outside of Kathmandu. The resort hosts its own resident tiger. Ken has down loaded all the ebird lists for the areas that they will be traveling to and has spent the last month with his face in the field guide to the region. Look for more of their adventures in the upcoming issue of the *Yellowthroat*. *Ken Drier*

MONTGOMERY COUNTY

Eric Skrzypczak, our intrepid webmaster and tech guru, wrote cryptically that "due to trips to South Africa I broke 800 species photographed on my website wildlifehobbies.com ." Check his website for more!

Chris Wright wants to send a belated note of thanks to *Clive Harris* and *Maryanne Dolan* for the memorable gull class they gave in January of 2011 to the MOS Education Seminar in Elkton. "This September I found myself on Cape Cod during one of those inexplicable lulls in migration, sitting on a porch with a fabulous view of a harbor and sand bars, but almost no birds to scope except for gulls, lots of immature Great Black-backed, Herring and Laughing gulls following the incoming fishing boats. After two days of watching these brown birds I thought I could actually tell a juvenile Great Black-backed from a first winter Herring. After a while they even started to look beautiful! So thanks, Clive, from a late convert to gull fancying."

Woody and *Rae DuBois* write that they spent the first week of November birding in South Carolina on a Road Scholar excursion called 'Birding the Low Country'. Our home base was a cottage on Knowles Island near Ridgeland in the middle of the salt marshes. We visited various sites in the Savannah NWR complex, combining looking at wading birds with photographing the beautiful moss draped live oaks. Pine Warblers were numerous everywhere we went as were Yellow-Rumps. The shorebird viewing was best at Mitchellville Beach on Hilton Head where, along with Marbled Godwits and Sanderlings, 30 – 40 Black Skimmers fed and rested. Our target bird, however, was not a shore bird, but the Red-cockaded Woodpecker. On the second try, we finally saw two of them near dusk as they came back to their holes in the longleaf pines at the Webb Wildlife Management Area near the Savannah River. A bonus sighting that same day was a four-foot-long beautifully marked Canebreak Rattlesnake sunning itself in the road at Webb."

Mike Bowen writes that he spent almost the entire month of October in Argentina. "In company of Peter Bono, a former MBC member now residing on Cape Cod, I birded with a group put together by Field Guides of Austin, Texas. A 'pre-trip' group flew from Buenos Aires to Posadas, in extreme NE Argentina, and from there to a wonderful 'estancia,' (ranch destination) deep (and we mean REALLY DEEP) in the outback of Corrientes Province. Top birds there were the very strange Strange-tailed Tyrant and the rare Yellow-breasted Cardinal, a species that has been decimated for the cage bird trade. I took photos of both these species for inclusion on my Flickr site https://www.flickr.com/photos/30142646@N05/, where I'm accumulating photos of hundreds of bird species that I've been lucky enough to come across since acquiring my current camera (a Canon PowerShot SX50 HS) in 2013. A return trip to Buenos Aires put the group back in contact with the rest of the birding party for the tour of NW Argentina, one of Field Guides' most popular destinations. We all flew to the ancient city of Cordoba, and from there we worked up to the North, hugging the Andes Mountains to our West. It's difficult to single out the 'best' birds, but Andean Condor and three species of Flamingoes must rank right up there. Our ultimate achievement, and this was just short of 15,000 ft. in the Andes, was finding a hunkered down Diademed Sandpiper-plover in a wet gulley. I recorded 421 species in Argentina and raised my Argentina list to more than 470. And, Oh Yes, my World Bird List passed the 4000 mark some place along the way in Argentina. (Don't ask me to say which species – I don't know!)"
Chris Wright

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SOUTHERN MARYLAND

Tyler Bell writes: "*Jane Kostenko* and I wanted to do something special for our 25th anniversary. Initially, we looked into Hawaii but we couldn't dedicate the two weeks likely necessary to do all of the islands that we wanted to visit. Then, IcelandAir offered a package deal that was affordable and the right length of time.

"We flew out of Dulles on Saturday, November 22 arriving in Keflavik, Iceland early in the morning on Sunday, November 23. We arrived at the hotel, dumped bags in our room and headed toward downtown Reykjavik, an easy 20 minute walk. In short order, we picked up the two lifers on our trip: Redwing and Whooper Swan. Redwings were the only Turdus species that we saw there though there are others represented in breeding season. Whooper Swans were a dime a dozen in the pond in the center of town where people feed the various waterfowl. Graylag Geese were quite common wherever we went but in the pond, there were at least 100 birds present at any time. Other waterfowl uncommon in the US included Eurasian Wigeon, Common Teal (Eurasian Green-winged Teal) and Tufted Duck. Black-headed Gulls were the most abundant gull species though Common Gull (Eurasian Mew Gull) was the second most abundant species followed by Glaucous Gull, which was in the harbor or along the coast, and European Herring Gull.

"Since birding was not the focus of our trip, that's pretty much the extent of it, a grand total of 29 species. We saw the same birds in town whenever we walked there but we did some tours around the southwest part of the island that were mostly focused on geology. The Golden Circle tour first stops at Þingvellir (pronounced Thing vell ur), the location of the oldest parliament on earth (930 AD). The Icelanders chose this location because it is the most visible spot where the North American and Eurasian plates are splitting apart. It's the junction of the two and you can walk down a rift canyon from the plateau down to the Parliament building.

"Next stop was Geysir where the first geyser was seen and named. The original Geysir (pronounced Gay sear) does not erupt regularly anymore but Strokkur is more active, erupting every two or three minutes. When we first arrived, we watched with dismay as it erupted and drenched the viewers who chose the wrong location. Thankfully, it was very frequent and as we watched upwind, we figured out that the geyser would begin surging up and down then a large, smooth boil of water welled up just prior to the eruption. Helps when trying to take photographs if you know when it's going to happen!

"The next day was riding Icelandic horses through the lava fields created by an eruption about 6000 years ago. Icelandic horses (don't call them ponies!) are short and have long manes and forelocks. They have a distinctive gait when trotting that is said to be quite comfortable. Not being much of a horseman, I was not going to push my horse to that speed to find out. About 2/3 of the way along our trek, it began to hail on us. We stopped at a grassy area where the horses, oblivious to the weather, began to graze. Our guides told us to spin the horses around so our backs were to the hail and they grazed away quite contentedly until the hail stopped after about 5 minutes. Our guide said that her grandfather explained that the reason why the Icelandic horses and cows were so diminutive was because when the Vikings were coming to Iceland, they picked the smallest animals so they had more room for alcohol! Doubtful that's true but a funny bit of folklore.

"On our return, it happened to be my birthday. It was the longest birthday I've ever experienced due to the 5 hours gained by flying west. Ultimately, it was a 29-hour day. Icelanders are required to take 8 years of English as well as 6 years of Danish (due to their previous allegiance before declaring independence) so everyone is able to converse easily. They appreciate any effort that you can put forth to speak their language so we did learn a few phrases. The most common is Thank You or Takk. The more formal Takk Fyrir, or Thanks For, is returned with Sömeleiðis or Same To You.

"We'd like to return to Iceland when the day length is a lot longer than the 5 full hours of sunlight in late November. Due to its proximity to the Arctic Circle, they experience almost 24 hours of sunlight in the peak of summer and the opposite in winter. Many arctic nesting birds would be present in late June or early July that were long gone by the time we arrived. Still, because of the warming influence of the Gulf Stream, Iceland's temperatures are not much different from the DC area despite being so much further north. So, even though there aren't many hours of day in the depths of winter, you can still see a lot. No reason to wait!"

TALBOT COUNTY

Washington State Jewels

During the first 10 days of September *Wayne Bell, Les Coble* and *Charles Hopkins* traversed the diverse, pristine habitats in the mountains and along the Pacific coast of Washington, and absorbed the panoramic views of this beautiful state, from Olympia to Mt. Rainier, Westport to Neah Bay and ending at Port Angeles (Mt. Olympia).

The "high" of the trip was at 7000 feet on the slopes of Mt. Rainier. Low level clouds obscured the summit but a Water Pipit, "Oregon" Juncos, and pesky Grey Jays kept the anticipation of the next turn in the trail a warming life experience (yes, it WAS a cold 30 degrees, plus a 15-25 mph northwest wind). But the "highlight" was a pelagic trip to Gray's Canyon. Over 27,000 birds were tallied, 21,000 of which were Sooty Shearwater. Also seen were Buller's Shearwater, Rhinoceros Auklet, Scripp's Murrelet, Sabine's Gull, three Jaegers, storm petrels, murres, terns, fulmars, S. Polar Skua, none of which were single birds. The harbor at Westport yielded 6 Wandering tattlers and a "buff-color-painted" jetty tip with over 350 Marbled Godwits.

The west side of the Cascades holds many subspecies. Look up Peale's Peregrine, Audubon's Thrush, Seattle Wren for a sampling of the 16 subspecies sightings. We did miss the pelagic trip held the day we arrived in Westport. On that trip the pelagic habitat of the Peale's Peregrine was confirmed as it was seen 40 miles from shore. This subspecies has been observed eating its catch as it returns to shore. *Margie Steffens*

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Book Review: The Unfeathered Bird, by Katrina van Grouw.

Princeton University Press, 2013. 304 pages. $49.95.

Not many authors want to thank someone for "wading up to his waist in a fetid African swamp to bring me a decomposing pelican" or volunteering "the use of his beetle colonies to clean the smallest bird specimens" or showing up with "a fresh kiwi just when I needed one." But Katrina van Grouw welcomed such help in creating this gorgeous and meticulously researched exploration of the bird within.

Twenty-five years in the making, "The Unfeathered Bird" combines a wealth of exquisite sepia-toned drawings (think Leonardo) with a text that is erudite, entertaining, and mostly jargon-free. Reading this book is like taking an ornithology course in an art museum.

The author—graduate of the Royal College of Art, former curator of the ornithological collections at London's Natural History Museum, bird bander, and taxidermist—envisioned "a convergence of art and science; accessibility and erudition; old and new." It's really about the *outside* of birds, the author contends, "how their appearance, posture, and behavior influence, and are influenced by, their internal structure."

The book is large—nearly 300 pages, each 10 inches by 12 inches, and many illustrations span two pages. The artful drawings are all of actual specimens, painstakingly prepared and studied and posed. (No birds were harmed during the making of this book, she is quick to point out.) Many of the book's 385 illustrations focus on specific structures. A page, or even two facing pages, may juxtapose the skulls of half a dozen shorebirds, or present multiple views of woodpecker feet. Front and side views of an owl's head, feathers removed, reveal the asymmetry of the ear openings.

When the author-artist turns to individual birds, the plot thickens. Whether the subjects are unfeathered to show skin, or skinned to reveal musculature, or bare skeletons, they are drawn in lifelike poses: a plunging gannet, a swimming loon, a bittern in camouflage posture, a water-pattering storm-petrel. A flamingo skeleton incubates a single blue egg. The effect is stunning.

Occasionally, van Grouw leaves select feathers intact, with dramatic results. A Eurasian Buzzard aloft, skeleton enhanced with flight feathers, for instance, evokes a primitive flying machine. Or Icarus. The skeleton of an Indian Peafowl (also on the dust jacket) flaunts a shower of snowy display feathers.

Sometimes she groups two or three individuals of the same species, each in a different stage of undress, but posed naturally--for instance, a trio of companionable Rock Doves: one a skeleton; another skin removed and pecking at grains; the third with feathers removed. These groupings compel the reader to compare them closely. Nor is narrative absent: watch a skeleton frigatebird pursue a skeleton tropicbird. Or listen as Southern Screamer raises its wings and opens its beak: you can hear this skeleton scream.

"The Unfeathered Bird" opens with 25 pages devoted to the "Generic"—features common to all birds. Illustrations focus on particular structures, such as hind limbs, or wings and tail.

Text keeps pace with the illustrations. Alongside multiple views of breastbone and pectoral girdle, van Grouw writes, "Flight makes rather specific demands on the physical engineering of an animal. The skeleton needs to be of a lightweight structure, with a large flattened surface for the attachment of muscles, and to have tremendous rigidity and the strength to support the entire weight of the animal while airborne.... The breastbone, or sternum, is enormous—far larger than it is in other vertebrates."

The bulk of the book, however, addresses the "Specific"--birds grouped in a Linnean fashion: Accipitres, Picae, Anseres, Grallae, Gallinae, and Passeres.

Here, too, the author interweaves anatomy and art. Falcons may be fast, she writes, but accipiters are the more agile. "In the Accipiters, it's all about reach. They have long thighs, long tibias, long tarsi, and long toes." She illustrates with a glaring Eurasian Sparrowhawk, feathers removed, as it stands astride its victim, a fully feathered Collared-Dove; on the facing page a Sparrowhawk skeleton clutches a Blue Tit skeleton.

As van Grouw expands on the links between anatomy and destiny, hardly a page passes without introducing a splash of intriguing ornithological insights:

- Pellets are not exclusive to owls: "Virtually all meat-eating birds produce pellets, even small insectivorous species."
- The Kiwi--"the closest thing to a mammal that a bird can be"--lays eggs are "a staggering four times larger than those of any bird of equivalent size."
- "Hummingbird wings sit in a highly developed ball and socket joint..., allowing them full rotation through 360 degrees...."
- "Turacos as a family have two unique, copper-based pigments that occur nowhere else in the animal kingdom."
- Kingfisher burrows are "filthy, full of excrement and food remains. Adult birds can bathe when they exit; the young are protected "by spending a prolonged period in the pin-feather stage before the emerging feathers break through their waxy sheath. Meanwhile looking more like little hedgehogs than birds!"

Passerines, though they represent well over half of all known bird species, show relatively little anatomic diversity, so "The Unfeathered Bird" gives them relatively short shrift. One exception is finches, notes van Grouw; the beak of the Hawfinch is as different from that of the Goldfinch "as heavy-duty pliers are from fine forceps." She presents a page of European finch skulls and, facing, a page of skulls from Darwin's finches.

Then there's the passerine's vocal apparatus. "Birds produce vocal sounds not in their larynx in the throat, as mammals do, but at the other end of the windpipe.... The syrinx is situated where

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the windpipe, or trachea, divides into two to enter the lungs.... The two sides may be 'played' independently." Multiple pairs of muscles operating within the syrinx allow songbirds to produce complex vocalizations.

As for the windpipe itself, in a "seemingly random assortment" of some 60 bird species, the windpipe is actually longer than the neck (presumably for amplification). Arguably the book's most bizarre drawing shows the super-long windpipe of a drab bird-of-paradise known as a Trumpet Manucode; in this unfeathered bird the windpipe loops out of the throat and coils, like yards of garden hose, in the front of the breast, before returning to the lungs.

van Grouw concludes "The Unfeathered Bird" with a wink. The closing pages show an English Robin--first with skin removed, perching on a spade handle, a worm dripping from its beak. On the facing page a robin, feathers removed, launches into flight. Turn the page and you find a skeleton robin flat on its back, legs stiffly in the air. Killing off a skeleton—that's talent! And wit.

Shortcomings? The book has an index of species, but it could benefit from an index of scientific content (where else did I see that mention of coracoids?) And glossary (what are coracoids?) ("The coracoids are the struts that project from either side of the breastbone and brace the wings apart.") Granted, this would be an immense task, and it would also weigh the book down. Maybe a small "supplement"?

As for the illustrations, occasionally a specific anatomic detail described in the text can be difficult to pick out in the drawing; an enlargement of the detail might help.

Overall, though, "The Unfeathered Bird" is a wonder. Regardless of its heft and beauty, it should not be relegated to the coffee table. It deserves regular forays to the desk top, where it can be pored over and absorbed and relished. Like the spectral, skeletal Wandering Albatross that dominates the title pages, this book soars.

Lydia Schindler,
Montgomery Bird Club

MOS NEEDS YOU!!!

Several key positions need to be filled if MOS is to continue as a viable organization! Please help out. If you can't make a long-term commitment, we would still appreciate your stepping in on a temporary basis. Members who are stepping down will provide mentoring and you the MOS Board will also help.
--- Conference Coordinator - Maureen Harvey, our Past President, stepped in for our 2015 conference after Janet Shields stepped down after serving many years. But Maureen can't continue. WITHOUT A VOLUNTEER THERE WILL BE NO 2016 CONFERENCE! The conference is a highlight of the year for many of us; please HELP! Many experienced members can provide assistance with aspects of the conference - Silent Auction, Field Trips, etc.
--- Subject Matter Expert for website enquiries - Bob Ringler has been our on-line expert for fielding questions from the general public on bird identification. Questions range from the nearly obvious to more challenging. This is an important outreach role for MOS. You don't have to be an "expert"; you can send the tough ones to others in MOS who might be more knowledgeable.
--- Yellowthroat Calendar - Andy Martin is stepping down from this important position. Collect and collate all the information from MOS chapters on field trips, monthly meetings, and special events for the five issues per year. This is a important section of our Yellowthroat newsletter. And Andy will mentor you.

There are less urgent, but nonetheless important, positions that also need to be filled, such as Development and Statewide Education.

Tom Strikwerda, MOS President

Book Review: The Passenger Pigeon, by Errol Fuller.

Princeton University Press, 2015. 184 pp. $29.95

Most of us know by now that the last Passenger Pigeon (*Ectopistes migratorius*), affectionately known as Martha, died on September 1, 1914, in the Cincinnati Zoo. One hundred years later, various news media have "celebrated" (not my word) this event. There are also reflective articles by, e.g., Yeoman ("From Billions to None," *Audubon*, May-June 2014) and McCracken ("One Hundred Years after Martha, the Last Passenger Pigeon, *BirdWatch Canada*, summer 2014). The whole story of *E. migratorius* has been addressed by Mershon (*The Passenger Pigeon*, New York, 1907), Schorger (*The Passenger Pigeon: Its Natural History and Extinction*; Madison, Wisconsin, 1955), Greenberg (*A Feathered River Across the Sky*, New York, 2014), and in a chapter by Cokinos (Hope is the Thing with Feathers, New York, 2000). Errol Fuller's The Passenger Pigeon lies comfortably between the shorter articles and the longer tomes, imitating neither genre while providing an overview that makes an interesting, albeit sobering, read.

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Book review continued from page 7

The contents of this little book of some 180 pages are inviting, with chapters like "The Downward Spiral," "Extinction: The Causes," and "Martha." If you are searching for famous quotations from times when the Passenger Pigeon was incredibly abundant, many are excerpted in the "Quotation" chapter. The chapters are unified by the bird itself, for otherwise the impression is of a series of topics put together in a somewhat logical but not always satisfying order. Indeed, the book gives an impression of being quickly cobbled together. Perhaps this was an effort to recognize (a better word) the centennial of Martha's death even if was published after that deadline. Despite the above, *The Passenger Pigeon* remains a satisfying overview of a sad legacy for which there is a surprising lack of written information and even less scientific data.

As befits a recognized artist, Fuller provides an intriguing introduction to works inspired by the bird's contemporary abundance and its incredible demise. Audubon's famous painting is reproduced here along with several species portraits by Louis Agassiz Fuertes. The most poignant is a two-page spread of *Falling Bough*, a watercolor painted by W. Ford in 2002 and the centerpiece of the introductory essay, "Imagine." Even at this greatly reduced size, the impact of the scene, its darkened colors, shadowy animal shapes, and bickering pigeons going about their lives as if nothing is happening, is unnerving. The chapter "Art and Books" presents many additional paintings and document covers, possibly some familiar, likely most not. The reproductions of human-pigeon composites from S. Angelucci's series *Aviary* (2014) demonstrate how the tale of the Passenger Pigeon continues to inspire artists and confuse beholders. The quality of the illustrations lives up to the reputation Princeton has rightfully earned for its natural history publications.

There are also plenty of photos. Alas, none show the actual passage of a pigeon flock or the ensuing slaughter thereof by market hunters. Is this the consequence of the early state of photography, the nature of the subject matter, or perhaps the widely held belief that a bird of such abundance would always be available to photograph? The photos Fuller is able to include are largely portraits of captive birds, especially those in a menagerie maintained by one Charles Whitman, a university lecturer in Chicago who summered (with some of his birds) in Woods Hole, MA, and became the first director of the world-famous Marine Biological Laboratory. The portraiture ends with Martha herself, first in her cage in Cincinnati and last with her stuffed remains now back on display at the Smithsonian Institution. The details of her story actually span two chapters with insights into the general failure of breeding captive Passenger Pigeons. Successes in saving the Whooping Crane and California Condor through captive breeding programs were yet to come.

Fuller's perspective, ranging from natural history through science to art, makes this book unique and, in the end, utterly fascinating. With regard to the science, he highlights the principal events that preceded the shooting of the last wild bird on March 24, 1902 by a fourteen-year-old boy in Pike County, OH (there do appear to be later records up to 1907). ". . . And then they were gone."

The causes of Passenger Pigeon extinction have come under the lens of modern ecology. Fuller explores our current understanding of the principal causes: market hunting (coupled with communication technology and an increasing railroad network that enabled prompt exploitation of roosting and nesting places); specialized diet (reliance on acorns and mast produced by mature forests); and low productivity (pairs produced only a single egg and abandoned the squab at an early age). We now believe that the pigeon population crossed some tipping point below which its recovery in the wild was impossible. This point likely occurred while there were still millions of birds, but the declining abundance of such an itinerant species went unrecognized. The loss of the eastern forests to agriculture reduced the number of suitable breeding sites; those sites that remained were increasingly difficult to locate by the smaller flock or flocks; and the telegraph and railroads allowed market hunters to zoom in quickly on would-be successful colonies. An inherent low reproductive rate sealed the pigeons' doom when existing populations could no longer fledge enough young replace themselves.

Widely accepted as they are today, the causes of Passenger Pigeon extinction beg questions as to how the species evolved to become so abundant in the first place. Despite the belief that habitat loss by clearing for agriculture was a key factor in the decline, there is also evidence that habitat clearing by Native Americans may have been a factor promoting the birds' abundance. Such clearings, brought about by deliberately set fires, also set forested lands back to early stages of ecological succession that are more productive in mast and other foods than the original mature woodlands. In short, the Passenger Pigeon's incredible abundance may have been promoted by a different kind of human-managed landscape, and its documented wanderings of immense populations were well-adapted to the transitory nature of the most productive habitat. Disruption of this relationship resulted in a bird that was mal-adapted to the landscape that was disturbingly created and then destructively populated by a kind of predator to which the species had no previous experience.

Fuller explains that *E. migratorius* translates as "migratory wanderer." The common name is derived from the French *passager*, "to pass fleetingly." In retrospect, the latter seems especially apt for a species that declined from a population in the billions to extinction in only 50 years. The scientific name, however, describes its highly specialized adaptation to a specific North American landscape. That landscape eventually vanished, ". . . And then they were gone."

Wayne Bell
Talbot Bird Club

YMOS News Fall 2014: Maryland Birds and Habitat Summer Program

MOS in conjunction with Washington College will once again offer the Maryland Birds and Habitats workshop this summer. The residential program will be offered from June 21 - 26, 2015 at Washington College. In addition to a wide variety of field activities, the group will learn how to use technology to locate bird observations and to report data on eBird. As in past years the program will be offered concurrently for both educators and students incoming into grades 7 - 12.

The program is open to participants of all ability levels. Beginners will receive instruction on both visual and auditory identification. Participants will learn to bird by habitat and will use atlas strategies and technology to document bird breeding. All will also learn how to use eBird to record, store, and access data. The instructors will be Dr. Wayne Bell and George Radcliffe, YMOS Coordinator.

Application information and program details are available on the YMOS Webpage at ymos.org. Some scholarships are available for both students and educators. Deadline for application is March 31, 2015. Applications can also be obtained from George Radcliffe at radclifg@gmail.com. MOS members should get this information into the hands of any potentially interested students or educators as soon as possible.

Submitted by George Radcliffe

Notice: MOS Annual Reports on Web

A new policy decision was made by Mark Johnson and Gene Scarpula the new managing and general editors, respectively, of *Maryland Birdlife*. They have decided to rejuvenate *Birdlife* as a pure ornithological journal. Thus, future issues will contain articles on bird-related research, studies, surveys and seasonal counts. Articles pertaining only to the activities of MOS will be published solely in *The Maryland Yellowthroat* or on the MOS website. I discussed this situation with Webmaster John Christy and YT Editor Richard Donham, and we decided that because of their lengthiness, the annual reports compiled by the President that include individual chapter and committee activities will migrate to the web in a new section under MOS Publications. Therefore, the 2012-2013 and 2013-2014 MOS Annual Reports are now available on the web from this link: http://www.mdbirds.org/publications/pubindex.html

Maureen Harvey, Past President
pastpres@mdbirds.org

Thanks to Our Esteemed Editors!

If you see Dr. Chan Robbins, please thank him. Chan stepped up as Editor-in-Chief of *Maryland Birdlife* for the September/October issue in 1947 and has continued until December of 2014. Over the years, his efforts have provided the leadership and the expertise that has resulted in the international recognition of Maryland Ornithological Society and has led to *Maryland Birdlife* becoming a valued publication of ornithology. Libraries at academic institutions as far west as Utah and east as Germany have become members to receive this valued subscription. Chan did this while being incredibly busy with his work at Patuxent Wildlife Research Center when he was technical editor of North American Birds, editing the Mid-Atlantic Flyway report for North American Bird Bander and publishing many manuscripts over the years. Along with Chan, Bob Ringler has steadfastly coordinated, assembled and published The Season reports; a summary of the sightings of migratory birds through the seasons in Maryland. Bob's work reviewing and assembling the various sightings data was indeed intensive, and required focused coordination and documentation of data from many different sources. Bob started with The Season reports in 1977 and continued this work until relatively recently. The work of Chan and Bob is unparalleled and represent the drive and dedication that was needed to produce this high quality publication of our Society. Thanks, Gentlemen! Your work represents what our Society holds at our key mission: to promote knowledge about birds and our natural resources, and foster appreciation and conservation. Your contributions were essential for MOS in achieving this goal!

As Chan and Bob take a well-earned retirement, Gene Scarpulla will serve as Editor-in-Chief and I will assist as Associate Editor. Gene also serves as Editor of *The Maryland Entomologist*. He will be soliciting manuscripts relating to the birds of Maryland, the District of Columbia, and the Mid-Atlantic region. Janet Millenson will continue as Layout Editor for *Maryland Birdlife*.

Submitted by Mark Johnson, Assoc. Editor, *Maryland Birdlife*.

Maryland Birdlife 2015

As the new Editor of *Maryland Birdlife*, the journal of the Maryland Ornithological Society (MOS), I am actively seeking submissions of articles and notes for the journal. Do you have a significant Maryland or DC record, including any first State or District records, that have not been written up as an article or note? Have you observed interesting bird behavior? Do your records document the birds of a particular geographic area? Do your records show trends over time? Publish your data and put it into the permanent record. Many MOS members have been conducting studies or surveys. If that is you, please consider submitting an article or note for an upcoming issue of *Maryland Birdlife*. With the advent of smartphones, it has become very easy to submit a photo or a sighting to the Maryland & DC Birding Google Group or to eBird, but this provides just a snippet of the sighting. A more in-depth note or article provides the whole story of the significance of a sighting. If you have never published before, don't worry, I will walk you through the process. If you would like to submit an

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article or note for a future issue of the journal, please contact me at ejscarp@comcast.net.

Maryland Birdlife has been edited for many decades by world-renowned ornithologist Chandler Robbins. This year, Chan retired as Editor and I have been appointed his successor. The other members of the new journal staff are Mark Johnson (Associate Editor) and Janet Millenson (Layout Editor). *Maryland Birdlife* will contain original articles, notes, and research papers primarily pertaining to Maryland, DC, and the Mid-Atlantic region. Potential topics may include significant Maryland and DC records, geographic or temporal distribution, ecology, biology, morphology, taxonomy, behavior, migration, life history, as well as other biological topics. Annual bird counts also will be published. (Routine MOS information [annual reports, chapter reports, etc.] will now be published in *The Maryland Yellowthroat* or on the MOS website.) *Maryland Birdlife* is provided to MOS members as part of your membership package. The format for *Maryland Birdlife* will be similar to the Maryland Entomological Society's journal, *The Maryland Entomologist*, of which, I am also the Editor. (You can view recent back issues of *The Maryland Entomologist* at www.mdentsoc.org.)

Chan's final issue was mailed out in November 2014. I collaborated on this final issue and incorporated some of my ideas. My official first issue will be published in the spring of 2015. I am requesting that members of MOS please consider submitting articles or notes to the journal. My plan is to publish two issues a year, spring and fall. But, this will depend on receiving sufficient submittals.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please respond to me directly at ejscarp@comcast.net. I look forward to hearing from you. And remember, "Enhance the knowledge of Maryland's birds by publishing in *Maryland Birdlife*."

Submitted by Gene Scarpulla, Editor of *Maryland Birdlife*

Talkin' Birds Radio Show Broadcast from the Smithsonian

"Ray Brown's Talkin Birds" radio program came to Washington, DC, Sunday November 9th to celebrate its 500th program. Never heard of the show? Neither had I until I receive an email from Ray, asking whether MOS members would like to attend the live broadcast. Several of us from MOS, along with those from other local environmental organizations, saw the show, followed by a 30-minute presentation on migration. We all arrived early, before the museum opened, to be in our seats by the 9:30 start. The program typically is a collection of interviews, fun facts, conservation ideas, and a "mystery bird" contest, and this show was no different. Ray Brown's informal, easy-going style put the audience and guests at ease. Special guests on the show were ornithologist Bruce Beehler from the Smithsonian, highlighting the second edition of his book with Thane Pratt: *Birds of New Guinea*. Also featured was an amazing young birder and blogger, Charlotte Wasylik from Vermilion, Alberta, Canada. Although there are few birders in her part of Canada, Charlotte began birding about six years ago and has really taken to birds and actively writes about them. Attending the show was a fun experience and showed a great way to bring different elements of birding into an entertaining show.

Although the program isn't broadcasted in Maryland except for the recently added station WKDI (840AM) in Denton, Maryland, you can listen live, as well as download prior shows and podcasts, at http://www.talkinbirds.com/. And you can read Charlotte's blog at prairiebirder.wordpress.com. Check out her post from November 11 for a summary and pictures of Ray's 500th program.

MOS was given an acknowledgement before and after the show and I was able to meet several other birders and representatives of other organizations, as well as Charlotte and her father, Rick, a farmer of certified organic grains and beef, poultry and eggs.

Tom Strikwerda
MOS President

Birds of Note – by Les Roslund

The top prize in the competition for "Best Bird Award" during this reporting period surely must be given to the COUCH'S KINGBIRD that showed up on Nov 11 at the Mason Road Pond in Allegany County just west of Rocky Gap. The bird was discovered by Kathy Calvert and Mike Welch of Frederick County and it has stayed around to be seen and enjoyed and photographed by numerous birders from throughout our region. The normal USA territory for this species is the extreme southern tip of Texas, and the bird is not known to be a wanderer. This is the first documented sighting of the species for the state of Maryland. Fortunately, the bird has also chosen to periodically call or scold. Without the vocalization this species is extremely hard to distinguish from the TROPICAL KINGBIRD which is somewhat more abundant. As of Nov 25 the bird continues to be seen and is remaining quite close to where it was initially found.

After a gentle and mild autumn, the weather turned sharply colder in mid-November along with the arrival of a large storm system in our area. This may have contributed to the surprising presence of a FRANKLIN'S GULL within a flock of gulls that began using the waters of the Chestertown Waste Water Treatment Pond near Chestertown, Kent County. On Nov 19, Mark Johnson of Aberdeen, Harford County, noticed this unusual small gull with a strange dark marking across the back of its neck while he scanned the flock of gulls on the pond. This bird has also been a birder's delight, for it has stayed around to be seen and photographed by many birders. As of Nov 25 the bird was still present on the pond.

Among the many fine birds discovered during the Annual November Rarity Roundup in Worcester County, a WESTERN TANAGER showed up on Assateague Island within the Bayside Campground territory. The first birders to find and report this bird were Dave Czaplak and Mary Ann Todd of Montgomery County. This bird turned out being a three-day wonder. The first sighting occurred Nov 14 and the last report came from the same area

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on Nov 16. Several previous reports of WESTERN TANAGER have occurred in Maryland at various locations, but this is the first report for Assateague Island.

Birds that show up in unusual locations provide fun for birders and non-birders alike, and this season such fun became available in a rain water pond in Prince George's County where four AMERICAN AVOCETS decided to forage and rest in the company of several CANADA GEESE. The pond was at the corner of Ora Glen Drive and Hanover Parkway in Greenbelt, MD. The AVOCET show began late in the afternoon of Oct 6 and was noticed and promptly reported by Tom Ostrowski of Greenbelt. Birders were there to greet them early in the morning of Oct 7, but the rush proved to be unnecessary. These birds liked the site, and stayed around for regular viewing until at least the morning of Oct 23. Occasionally they were joined by a few gulls, and once the pond also played host to a DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANT.

Another bird in an unusual location in October was a BRANT that was found foraging with other waterfowl on Piscataway Creek near Wharf Road, Prince George's County. Mark Rosital of PG County was the first to notice and report this bird after finding it on Oct 25. Usually one needs to go to Ocean City to reliably find BRANT, but this bird seemed quite content with the PG County habitat. The bird stayed around for the next two days, and was seen and enjoyed by several local birders.

This year there were very few reports of DICKCISSEL in Maryland, so it was a special treat for Frode Jacobsen of Baltimore County to see three of them as fly-over birds on Oct 24. These DICKCISSELS were passing over the north meadow of Jug Bay Wetlands Sanctuary, Anne Arundel County. No additional sightings of the birds were reported.

For the fourth year in a row, a BLACK-HEADED GULL has shown up at Paper Mill Flats, Baltimore County. It is reasonable to suspect that it is the same bird, now back to spend the winter in what has become a familiar habitat. This bird was first reported on Nov 1 by Kye Jenkins, Phoenix, Baltimore County. Others who had seen a BLACK-HEADED GULL in the same area in recent years had been watching for it. The Nov 1 arrival was within a week of the 2013 arrival date. The bird seems to have settled in, for reports of its presence were continuing through Nov 23.

November is a truly great month for gulls in Maryland, and this year the highlight is certainly the BLACK-LEGGED KITTIWAKE that was discovered by Dan Haas of Anne Arundel County on Nov 24. This species is very rarely found away from the coast. The bird was resting and foraging with other gulls at Sandy Point State Park, Anne Arundel County, and it was quite cooperative on a day when lighting was excellent for photography. Dan attained a large number of outstanding photos, as did others who were able to quickly respond to Dan's report. The bird was reported again on the morning of Nov 25.

And finally - there has been a sighting of a Maryland first-of-season SNOWY OWL on Poplar Island, Talbot County. This occurred on Nov 17. The report was passed from an anonymous construction worker to Tim Carney who performs periodic surveys of flora and fauna of Poplar Island for Maryland Environmental Services. A second report was similarly provided on Nov 24.

Third Workshop on Mainstreaming the Conservation of Bird Populations and their Habitats in Maryland. Jug Bay, 18th October 2014.

(**Editor's Note**: For reports of previous conferences in this series, see the Sept/Oct 2013 & the Mar/Apr 2014 issues of The Maryland Yellowthroat, available at http://www.mdbirds.org/).

Some 20 people drawn from the MOS, MOS Chapters, the USGS, Maryland DNR, Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, and the conservation community attended the Workshop. The purpose of the Workshop was to discuss progress on activities examined at the Second Workshop and a follow up meeting of an appointed Steering Group. The activities were:

1. Revision of the MD Wildlife Diversity Plan;
2. Analysis of the roles/features of bird observatories;
3. The Role of Advocacy; and
4. The MOS Long-range Plan.

Discussion was divided into a Plenary Session held in the morning and Working Groups in the afternoon.

1. Revision of the MD Wildlife Diversity Plan

Gwen Brewer (MD DNR) provided the background to the discussion on steps being taken for revision of the Plan -- required every 10 years under a mandate from US Fish and Wildlife Service. The last Plan was completed in 2005 and provided a comprehensive analysis of threats to species and their habitats. Revision will include updating of mapping resources, refining conservation threats such as climate change, and evaluating implementation efforts for conservation actions. In contrast to the 2005 Plan, plants will be included (under treatment of habitats and ecosystems), species and habitats will ranked according to level of threat, and emphasis will be placed upon monitoring to ensure priority conservation decisions are implemented in a time bound manner with scheduling, responsibilities, costs and measurable outcomes clearly stipulated under an Action Plan. A regional approach will be adopted using standardized criteria so that Plans from neighboring states have complementary actions at the ecosystem level. (It was noted that: a) the initiative supported by the US Natural Heritage Program receives no direct funding from Maryland; b) that the USFWS, on behalf of Congress, approves the federal funds that make up 50% of the Natural Heritage budget; and, c) that state non-game wildlife work in MD would all but collapse should these funds not be secured or in the event that a vote in Congress curtail the federal side of the program.)

Consultations with and participation of all relevant parties will begin later in 2014 and partnering fostered to broaden ownership and assure appropriate input. A Project Coordinator has been appointed (Ingrid.brofman@maryland.gov) and a website is to be established. The State Wildlife Grant Program funded by the US Department of the Interior supports the project.

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(It was noted that: a) the initiative supported by the US Natural Heritage Program receives no direct funding from Maryland; b) that the USFWS, on behalf of Congress, approves the federal funds that make up 50% of the Natural Heritage budget; and, c) that state non-game wildlife work in MD would all but collapse should these funds not be secured or in the event that a vote in Congress curtail the federal side of the program.)

DNR is preparing a Maryland Bird Conservation Initiative proposal as part of the MD Wildlife Diversity Plan. The Friends of Jug Bay in association with Jug Bay Wildlife Sanctuary will execute the initiative in collaboration with a variety of stakeholders and with advice from a Steering Group.

2. Analysis of the roles/features of Bird Observatories

Ron Gutberlet gave a presentation on findings of a study of 13 North American bird observatories, particularly concerning their genesis and mode of establishment and operational support. Site-based research, conservation and education/outreach constitute core functions, budgets range widely, staffing is paid (with one exception) and there is substantive partnering with conservation NGOs and research organizations. Scientists, educationalists, business managers, facilities operators and volunteers make up staffing and boards of directors oversee finances, policy and hiring/interviewing staff.

Discussion noted that most observatories grew up around an avian phenomenon with drivers involving: research, banding, committed staff /volunteers with quality experience ("movers and shakers") and students working on research assignments. Clearly defined objectives were essential along with realistic expectations stated in a business plan for longer-term objectives.

Actions:

Ron Gutberlet will provide a draft on requirements for a MD Bird Observatory. Considerations may include: best location(s) to capture the varied landscapes of the state; defining suitably-scaled bird banding function/operations; identifying educational functions/opportunities; value of attachment to educational and research establishments; required data collection/processing/dissemination; and, level/extent of coordination of monitoring programs/surveys. A small group will use a conference call in February 2015 to obtain feedback on lessons learned from existing bird observatories. A contributing paper prepared by Colin Rees entitled *Establishment of a Bird Observatory at the Jug Bay Wetlands Sanctuary* will be reviewed and comments provided and, Frode Jacobsen will investigate the eagle/osprey nest survey being conducted in Iowa for possible adoption as a pilot for the Patuxent/Jug Bay area.

3. Role of Advocacy

Kurt Schwarz told the Workshop that the volume of lobbying was increasing and placing great demands on MOS' capacity. Letter writing was reaching some 50 per year and testifying, appearances before the MD State Legislature and Federal authorities was consuming considerable time and effort. While the MOS Conservation Committee was active, the Chapters sometimes failed to respond in a timely fashion and are in need of motivation -- true advocacy requires a commitment to being present and representation at meetings. A more effective partnership with conservation organizations has been achieved but duplication of effort remains a problem.

A report was given on the highly contentious issue of free-roaming cats, and also on wind power placement in Dorchester and Somerset counties, wildlands status for Sideling Hill Wildlife Management Area, the protection of Sugarloaf Mountain and collaboration with Friends of the Earth calling on Congress to ban neonicotonics (neonics).

Actions: MOS to strengthen capacity to enhance lobbying activities to better coordinate with its Chapters and recruit membership for more effective lobbying; MOS to enhance partnering arrangements with conservation organizations at state and national levels; and, Encourage Chapters to establish a Conservation Chair/ Group.

4. MOS Long-range Plan

Colin Rees led the discussion and Joan Cwi gave a summary of a Survey of MOS Members and the bird conservation community as input to the MOS' Long-range Plan. The Plan will examine the operation of the MOS and will recommend how MOS may become a better-organized and more proactive organization in conserving bird populations and habitats.

The Survey of MOS Members found:

Most members are ready for change but care should be taken in defining opportunities/departures and not over-stretching capacity; Though a central challenge, attracting youth to birding was a priority; Wide support for stronger conservation activities; and, Need for increasing MOS/Chapter advocacy efforts. The Survey of conservation organizations found the following: Little partnering was being done by both parties; Suggested priorities for the MOS concerning bird conservation include: support to research workers and interns; and, taking the initiative on protecting bird populations; and; Support for co-funding initiatives with the MOS and its Chapters.

Some participants observed that Chapters do not feel a part of the MOS and that its additionality was marginal ('problem of selling MOS'). MOS was insufficiently goal- driven and there was also the question of attracting younger members; indeed, attracting more members. The latter issue was not easy to address given demographics and the nature of the digital age. Use of multimedia and task oriented activities (e.g., habitat restoration) were suggested as means to reach youth along with activities involving charismatic species (e.g., osprey banding). **MOS** should also become involved in broader fund-raising events to help its Chapters.

Actions:

MOS

MOS to resurrect the *Birding Trail* draft to provide birders with areas of note and raise awareness of habitats for bird conservation; MOS to consider using its Annual Meeting to include a session on bird conservation and reports from the Chapters;

MOS to deepen its partnerships with bird conservation NGOs

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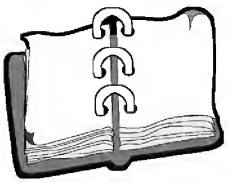

MOS Calendar
January - February 2015
By Andy Martin

Thursday, January 1

Baltimore. Loch Raven. Start the New Year birding. Varied habitats including woods, fields, and reservoir. Probably also birding other sites for a "Big Day" in Balt City and Co. Meet 8:30 AM, contact leader: Kevin Graff, keyweststyle2001@gmail.com or 410-557-2456 for location.

Harford. Perryman Area. Celebrate the new year/recover from New Year's Eve by birding the always productive Perryman Area with leader Phil Powers, 410-679-4116 or birdsinmd@verizon.net. Depart from the Aberdeen WalMart parking lot off Rte 40 at 8:30 AM.

Howard. Start Your 2013 List! Half day. Plan to carpool to different locations to find as many species as possible. The one day of the year where every bird is new! Meet 8 AM at Howard Conservancy/Mount Pleasant Farm. Expect moderate walking. Possibility of lunch stop depending on the weather. Facilities at some spots. Leader: Bonnie Ott, 443-285-3302 or bonnieott@verizon.net.

Montgomery. Earliest Bird Walk, Georgetown Reservoir and DC Hotspots. Half day. Start the New Year right. Meet at 8 AM at Georgetown Reservoir, DC by the gate leading to the dike between the pools. Reservations required. Strict limit: 20. Leader: Mike Bowen, 301-530-5764 or dhmbowen@yahoo.com.

YMOS. Deadline to commit to youth World Series of Birding teams. Contact George Radcliffe, radclifg@gmail.com if interested. Needed: Middle and High School Students loving birds and nature.

Christmas Count. **Bowie**, MD. Compiler: David Mozurkewich, 301-509-2212, mozurk@bellatlantic.net.

Patuxent. Lake Artemesia (Luther Goldman Birding Trail). Joint trip with PGAS. We will walk the paved trail around the lake as well as the trail through the woods along Indian Creek. Meet 3 PM at the parking lot at Berwyn Rd and Ballew Ave in Berwyn Heights. No reservations needed. For today only, this trip will be self-led by participants, because of the Christmas Bird Count in progress for Bowie.

Saturday, January 3

Christmas Count. **Inwood**, WV. A count centered near Martinsburg, WV. Compiler: Bob Dean, bobdean52@gmail.com.

Patuxent. Fran Uhler NA. Joint trip with PGAS. Habitat includes brushy fields, woods, and hedgerows for a good mix of species. Side trip to freshwater wetland at Horsepen Branch also possible. Meet 7:30 AM at the end of Lemon Bridge Rd off MD 197, just north of Bowie State U. and the MARC line. No reservations required. If you have questions, contact trip leader Bill Sefton at kiwisuits@msn.com or David Mozurkewich at mozurk@bellAtlantic.net for more info.

Sunday, January 4

Audrey Carroll Mid-winter Count. **Frederick**. Meet at the Sanctuary at 6:30 AM. You may want or need waterproof boots. Compiler: David Smith, 410-549-7082.

Tri-County. MD and DE Coast. Full day. Search for winter specialties and perhaps a rarity from recent CBCs. Bring a lunch. Dress for the weather. Meet 7:30 AM Ward Museum parking lot. Contact leader Ron Gutberlet, 903-714-7589 for directions and more details.

Christmas Count. **Annapolis-Gibson Island**. Coordinators: Sue Ricciardi, 410-647-9513 or susiericc@comcast.net and Hal and Lynn Wierenga, 410-647-7439, or hal.lynn@comcast.net.

Christmas Count. **Fort Belvoir, VA and MD**. Compiler: Kurt Gaskill, 703-768-2172 or kurtcapt87@verizon.net. MD Sector Leader: Lynne Wheeler, 301-743-3236 or comstockel@aol.com.

Christmas Count. **Calmes Neck, VA**. Compiler: Margaret Wester, 540-837-2799 or margaretwester@hotmail.com. This count includes much of far-western Loudoun as well as Clarke Counties.

Wednesday, January 7

Baltimore. First Wednesdays at Fort McHenry. A continuing series of monthly morning surveys of bird activity at the Fort and wetland. Scope can be useful. Cancelled in inclement weather. Meet 8 AM in the park, outside the Visitor Center. Leader: Mary Chetelat, 410-665-0769.

Thursday, January 8

Meeting. **Frederick**. *Bob Schaefer* will speak on hummingbirds. 7 PM at Homewood at Crumland Farms (7407 Willow Rd) in Frederick. For info contact Tom Humphrey, Pres@FrederickBirdClub.org or 301-696-8540.

Meeting. **Howard**. "The Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill; the fates of the marine birds and the pelagic Sargassum community," by *Dr. Chris Haney*. This talk will examine why and how Sargassum serves as a hot spot for marine birds, thereby raising their risk of oil exposure. Hospitality 7:30 PM; meeting/program 8 PM at Robinson Nature Center, 6692 Cedar Ln, Columbia. Info: Robin Todd, 410-491-5333.

Saturday, January 10

Baltimore. Youth birding at Blackwater NWR. All-day trip, bring lunch. Reservations required for this trip! The trip itself is free, but the refuge charges a $3 fee for each car. We can expect a wide variety of waterfowl, various wintering residents on the milder Eastern Shore, Bald Eagles, possible Brown-headed

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Nuthatches, Tundra Swans, Canada and Snow Geese, and possible White Pelicans. Leader: John Robinson, 443-810-9059 (cell), 410-483-6620 (home), jcrobin@jhmi.edu. See BBC website (http://baltimorebirdclub.org/) for all pertinent trip details.

Annual Holiday Party. **Carroll**. Once again hosted by Splinter and Sue Yingling at 70 Ridge Rd in Westminster. If you've never attended before, now's the time to start. Everyone has a good time. 7:30 PM until? For more info and to coordinate your potluck dish, contact Sue Yingling at 410-857-0902 or syingling@mac.com.

Kent. Eastern Neck NWR. Kick off your birding year with a half-day trip to Eastern Neck NWR for waterfowl, eagles, and winter landbirds. Meet 8 AM at Dollar General Store parking lot, Chestertown. Leaders: Walter Ellison and Nancy Martin, 410-778-9568 or borealdee@gmail.com.

Sunday, January 11

Baltimore. Marshy Point Nature Center. Half-day trip for waterfowl, raptors, and passerines. Half-mile trail leads to point overlooking Dundee Crk. Boots advisable, scopes useful. Meet 9 AM (contact leaders for meet location). Leaders: Brent and Mary Byers, 410-626-7294 or baypuffin@hotmail.com.

Covered Dish Dinner and Lecture. **Baltimore**. Tonight's featured talk: "Exploring New Guinea in Search of Birds of Paradise and Other Natural Wonders." Ornithologist and tropical ecologist *Bruce Beehler* made more than 50 field trips to New Guinea over a span of four decades. He will present highlights of his field trips, with a focus on the birds and other amazing inhabitants of New Guinea's rainforests. 4:30 PM at the Vollmer Center at Cylburn. Please contact Kevin Graff in advance at keyweststyle2001@gmail.com, to let him know you are coming, and what you plan to bring.

Fred Archibald Mid-winter Count. **Frederick**. Meet at the sanctuary at 6:30 AM. Dress warmly and wear waterproof boots. Contact Bob Schaefer, 301-831-5660.

Tuesday, January 13

Meeting. **Patuxent**. "Vernal Pool Ecology", presented by *Karyn Molines*, Div. Chief, Calvert Co Natural Resources. 7:30 PM, College Park Aviation Museum, 1985 Corporal Frank Scott Dr, College Park. For more info call 301-509-2212 or go to www.pgaudubon.org/programs.html.

Thursday, January 15

Meeting. **Caroline**. Program: "Orni-cool-ology." Speaker: *Les Coble*. 7:30 PM, Caroline Co Public Library, 100 Market St, Denton. Contact Debby Bennett at dabennett1996@gmail.com for more info.

Montgomery. Blue Mash. A mid-week walk to this popular site seeking winter birds: the expected cardinals, towhees, and mockingbirds as well as raptors (Northern Harrier a possibility) and sparrows. We'll check for ducks on the pond. Expect to walk (waterproof boots suggested!) about a mile on level trails. The trip will be cancelled or postponed in case of sleet, ice or rain. Start at 8 AM. Reservations not necessary. For directions or more info contact the leader: Stephanie Lovell at ctlovell1@yahoo.com or 240-242-3235.

Patuxent. Lake Artemesia (Luther Goldman Birding Trail). Joint trip with PGAS. We will walk the paved trail around the lake as well as the trail through the woods along Indian Creek. Meet 3 PM at the parking lot at Berwyn Rd and Ballew Ave in Berwyn Heights. No reservations needed. Call David Mozurkewich, 301-509-2212 or mozurk@bellAtlantic.net for more info.

Saturday, January 17

Mid-winter Count. **Baltimore**. To participate in post-migration bird count in your choice of location in Balt City or County, call Pete Webb, 443-904-6314 (m) or pete_webb@juno.com.

Baltimore. Saturday Monitoring Walks at Fort McHenry. Continuing survey of bird activity at the Fort and wetland. Cancelled in inclement weather. Meet 8 AM in the park, outside the Visitor Center. Leader: David Sandler, 410-370-0747.

Mid-winter Count. **Carroll.** Parties of counters will set their own schedules in their pre-arranged areas, to count resident and late migrant bird species throughout the County. Contact Don Jewell to verify your bird counting area (jewelldg@gmail.com or 410-259-4716). Tally Rally will be hosted by Amy Hoffman at her home. If you will be attending the Tally, please RSVP by Jan 15 to Amy at 410-549-3598 and bring a cash donation ($5) or a food item.

Harford. Conowingo Gull/Eagle Watch. Dennis Kirkwood (410-692-5905; newarkfarms@gmail.com) leads this morning survey from Fisherman's Park just below the Conowingo Dam on the Harford Co side of the Susquehanna. Meet 8 AM in the fisherman's parking area to begin the search for Bald Eagles, maybe a Golden Eagle, various gulls, and waterfowl.

Howard. Alpha Ridge Landfill. Reservations required. Carpooling is required. Moderate walking over hills and fields of the landfill. We will search for Short-eared Owls with no guarantee of finding one. Other possibilities are Northern Harrier, American Kestrel, Horned Lark, American Pipit, and Eastern Meadowlark. If we finish early, we may go to Mount Pleasant and look for wintering sparrows. Limited to a maximum of five cars. Contact Joe Hanfman for reservations, auk1844@gmail.com, 410-772-8424.

Patuxent. Governor Bridge NA. Joint trip with PGAS. Habitat includes mature woods along the Patuxent River, brushy fields, and a network of freshwater wetlands, ponds and small streams. Meet 7:30 AM at the parking lot for Governor Bridge NA . No reservations required. The Natural Area is located on the south side of Governor Bridge Rd, approximately 1 mile east of MD 301. If you have questions, contact trip leader Bill Sefton at kiwisuits@msn.com or David Mozurkewich at mozurk@bellAtlantic.net.

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Sunday, January 18

Anne Arundel. Thomas Point. Dan Haas will lead a trip to Thomas Point to look for birds in the bay. We'll meet at 8 AM at the Parole P&R located on Harry Truman Pkwy, between Riva and South Haven Rds. Leader: Dan Haas, nervousbirds@gmail.com. Approximately 11:30 AM return to Barbara Johnson's house for post trip warm up with soup and cider. Must RSVP to Barbara at barbarajohnson222@gmail.com or 410-703-4664, 1905 Kingswood Ct. Bring soup, bread, drinks, or appetizers.

Montgomery. Black Hill RP. All birders, but especially new birders, are welcome on this half-day trip, which will focus on the identification of ducks at this premiere county spot for winter waterfowl. Meet 8 AM at the Visitors Center in Black Hill RP, and bring a spotting scope if you have one. For reservations (required) and more info, contact the leader: Gerry Hawkins at maineusa@comcast.net or 571-277-8406 (cell).

Wednesday, January 21

Meeting. **Anne Arundel**. 7:30 PM at the Blue Heron Center at Quiet Waters Park in Annapolis. "Maryland Biodiversity Project (MBP)" by *Jim Brighton*, Wildlife Enthusiast. Jim Brighton will describe the MBP, aiming to catalog all the living things of MD to promote education and conservation by helping to build a vibrant general nature study community. More info: Colin Rees, 410-757-8570 or reescolin@hotmail.com.

Meeting. **Montgomery**. "Project Snowstorm." A thorough discussion of the massive irruption of Snowy Owls in the winter of 2013-2014 by *David Brinker*, MD DNR. 7:30 PM at Potomac Presbyterian Church, 10301 River Rd, Potomac. For more info contact Ed Patten at epatten1022@verizon.net.

Saturday, January 24

Mid-winter Count. **Harford**. Contact compiler, Rick Cheicante, 410-803-2712 or rickcheicante@cs.com to participate in this opportunity to assess bird life quantity in our area. Feeder counters are especially welcome.

Kent. Ocean City and Worcester County. Our annual search for winter specialties including gannet, sea ducks, alcids, gulls, Purple Sandpipers, and wintering songbirds. Full day. Dress warmly, bring lunch and warm beverages. Meet 8 AM at Dollar General Store parking lot, Chestertown. Leaders: Walter Ellison and Nancy Martin, 410-778-9568 or borealdee@gmail.com.

Patuxent. Winter Gulls at Brown Station Landfill. Joint trip with PGAS. Join gull afficionado Gene Scarpulla for a brief overview of gull identification and then practice your ID skills with the winter gull flock at Brown Station. The Landfill is not usually open for public birding access, so please take the opportunity to join us. Meet at Bowie P&R to carpool to site; please contact Gene at ejscarp@comcast.net for meet time.

Sunday, January 25

C&O Canal Count. **Allegany/Garrett, Washington, Frederick, Montgomery, and DC**. DC Audubon's signature event is the C&O Canal Count, a midwinter bird survey that attempts to count all of the birds along the entire 184.5 mile length of the canal on one specific day. Checkout the DC Audubon website at http://audubondc.org/co-canal-count/ or contact canalcount@gmail.com to sign up.

Monday, January 26

Meeting. **Tri-County**. "Two Visits to Hog Island, Maine" presented by *Jen Elmer* and *Jackie Darrow*. 7 PM at Asbury Methodist Church, Fox Rm, south entrance, Camden Ave, Salisbury. For more info contact Betty Pitney at 410-543-1853.

Tuesday, January 27

Washington. Dinner and Movie Night. Join us at the Mt. Aetna Nature Center for dinner and a movie! Pot luck starts at 6 PM. Bring your own place setting and a dish to share. Meeting follows at 7 PM with the film *Penguins: The Birds that Wanted to be Fish*.

Saturday, January 31

Anne Arundel. CBEC and Kent Island. Winter wildlife trip. Meet 8 AM at Bay 50 Shopping Center located off Rte 50 on Whitehall Rd. Contact leader, Judy Wink at 410-924-8633 or jwink@BayRestoration.org for more info.

Baltimore. Patterson Park. Come see what birding action abounds amid the varied habitats of this green oasis in the middle of Balt. Meet 8 AM at the White House just inside the west edge of the park at intersection of S. Patterson Park Ave and Lombard St. For questions, contact Patterson Park Audubon Center at ppaudubon@gmail.com or 410-558-2473.

Harford. Eastern Neck NWR/Upper Shore/Kent County. Late winter is prime time to visit here. Diverse habitat provides a broad variety of species with a focus on wintering waterfowl. The leader is Eric Vangrin, evangrin@msn.com. Meet at the commuter lot (Havre de Grace P&R) on Rte 155 at the intersection with I-95 at 7:30 AM.

Sunday, February 1

Mid-winter Count. **Frederick**. Contact David Smith, 410-549-7082 for more info. Tally Rally afterwards at the Smith's.

Mid-winter Count. **Kent**. Full day. Join the field crew or count in your neighborhood, anywhere in Kent Co. Contact Walter Ellison and Nancy Martin, 410-778-9568 or borealdee@gmail.com for more info.

Montgomery. Winter Waterfowl on the Potomac. Meet 8 AM in the Swain's Lock parking lot at the end of Swain's Lock Rd. Bring a scope if you have one. Trip will be canceled if icy conditions along the canal towpath make walking treacherous. Reservations required. For reservations and more info, contact Andy Martin, martinap2@verizon.net or 301-529-2066 (cell).

Washington. Black Hill RP. Meet 8 AM at the Rte 66 P&R for a trip to Black Hill RP. Contact Doris Berger at 301-739-8907 to register.

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Wednesday, February 4

Baltimore. First Wednesdays at Fort McHenry. A continuing series of monthly morning surveys of bird activity at the Fort and wetland. Scope can be useful. Cancelled in inclement weather. Meet 8 AM in the park, outside the Visitor Center. Leader: Mary Chetelat, 410-665-0769.

Meeting. **Carroll**. "Maryland's Rare, Threatened, and Endangered Bird Species" by *James McCann*. 7 PM at the Carroll Nonprofit Center, 255 Clifton Blvd, Westminster. Contact Don Jewell at jewelldg@gmail.com or 410-259-4716 for more info.

Thursday, February 5

Meeting. **Frederick**. *Kurt Schwarz* will speak on Cape May migrations. 7 PM at Homewood at Crumland Farms (7407 Willow Rd) in Frederick. For info contact Tom Humphrey, Pres@FrederickBirdClub.org or 301-696-8540.

Patuxent. Lake Artemesia (Luther Goldman Birding Trail). Joint trip with PGAS. We will walk the paved trail around the lake as well as the trail through the woods along Indian Creek. Meet 3 PM at the parking lot at Berwyn Rd and Ballew Ave in Berwyn Heights. No reservations needed. Call David Mozurkewich, 301-509-2212 or mozurk@bellAtlantic.net for more info.

Saturday, February 7

Baltimore. Waterfowl and rare birds roundup. We'll be checking out several sites in search for ducks, geese, and possible swans at Quarry Lake, Loch Raven area, and along shoreline of Baltimore Co. Any recently reported hot-line rare birds will be fair game. Meet at Cromwell Bridge Rd P&R (exit 29A off I-695) at 8 AM. Leader: Kevin Graff, keyweststyle2001@gmail.com.

Harford. Bradenbaugh Flats. Enjoy a tour through NW Harford Co's agricultural area to find wintering fieldbirds and waterfowl. Expect Horned Larks, Ring-necked Ducks, with possible Cackling Goose, longspurs, and Snow Buntings. Meet at Jarrettsville ES at 8 AM. The trip ends at the leader's house with hot soup. Contact Dennis Kirkwood, 410-692-5905 or newarkfarms@gmail.com for further info.

Mid-winter Count. **Howard**. Compilers: Joe Hanfman, auk1844@gmail.com or 410-772-8424 and Joe Byrnes, LBRoller@verizon.net.

Patuxent. Fran Uhler NA. Joint trip with PGAS. Habitat includes brushy fields, woods, and hedgerows for a good mix of species. Side trip to freshwater wetland at Horsepen Branch also possible. Meet 7:30 AM at the end of Lemon Bridge Rd off MD 197, just north of Bowie State U. and the MARC line. No reservations required. If you have questions, contact trip leader Bill Sefton at kiwisuits@msn.com or David Mozurkewich at mozurk@bellAtlantic.net for more info.

Sunday, February 8

Baltimore. Marshy Point Nature Center. Half-day trip for waterfowl, raptors, and passerines. Half-mile trail leads to point overlooking Dundee Crk. Boots advisable, scopes useful. Meet 9 AM (contact leaders for meet location). Leaders: Brent and Mary Byers, 410-626-7294 or baypuffin@hotmail.com.

Montgomery. Oaks Landfill, Laytonsville. Bundle up to explore this now-closed landfill adjacent to the Blue Mash Nature Trail. Should be mostly open terrain with some ponds. Possible wintering sparrows, raptors, and waterfowl. Leader will have scope for distant birds. We have special permission to enter this "closed to the public" landfill so reservations are essential. Limit 16. Meet at 3:30 PM on landfill entrance drive at 6001 Rte 108, Laytonsville. For reservations and more info, contact the leader: Mark England at 240-375-4500 (cell) or markengland@canamcontractors.com.

YMOS. Ocean City Birding. Beginning to Advanced. 8 AM to ?? Waterfowl, including scoters, eiders, possible shorebirds. The group will meet at 8 AM at the Ocean City Inlet (Large jetty at southernmost point of OC). We'll also go inland for a greater variety of waterfowl. Bring plenty of warm clothing. Contact George Radcliffe at radclifg@gmail.com for more info and to make a reservation.

Tuesday, February 10

Meeting. **Allegany/Garrett.** The speaker will be *Dr. Frank Ammer* and the title will be "Avian associations with mine habitats (birds and coal mines)." 7 PM in Rm 224 at Compton Hall, Frostburg State U., Frostburg. For info contact Mary Huebner at marybrd22@gmail.com.

Meeting. **Patuxent**. Monarch Butterfly Conservation, presented by *Richard J. Dolesh*, Vice President of Conservation and Parks, National Park & Recreation Association. 7:30 PM, College Park Aviation Museum, 1985 Corporal Frank Scott Dr, College Park. For more info call 301-509-2212 or go to www.pgaudubon.org/programs.html.

Wednesday, February 11

Meeting. **Montgomery**. "Quiz Night." Back by popular demand! Come along and test your bird identification skills in a photo quiz of mid-Atlantic birds, presented by *Clive Harris*, MBC VP. If you're interested in submitting photos of birds to be in the quiz, please contact Clive at clivegharris@yahoo.com. 7:30 PM at Potomac Presbyterian Church, 10301 River Rd, Potomac. For more info contact Ed Patten at epatten1022@verizon.net.

Thursday, February 12

Meeting. **Howard**. "*Birds of a Feather: seasonal changes on both sides of the Atlantic*," by *Colin Rees*. His talk will draw upon observations from the book he co-authored with a birder from the UK. Hospitality 7:30 PM; meeting/program 8 PM at Robinson Nature Center, 6692 Cedar Ln, Columbia. Info: Robin Todd, 410-491-5333.

Friday to Monday, February 13 to 16

Great Backyard Bird Count. Anyone can take part, from novice bird watchers to experts, by counting birds for as little as 15 min-

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utes on one or more days and reporting the sightings online at www.birdsource.org/gbbc/.

Saturday, February 14

Baltimore. Youth birding at Marshy Point Park. Easy walk in a very diverse area is good for feeder birds and winter residents of land, marsh, and water varieties. Sparrows, finches, and ducks are common and hopefully easy to see. Meet 9 AM at Marshy Point. Contact leader for directions. Leader: John Robinson, 443-810-9059 (cell), 410-483-6620 (home), jcrobin@jhmi.edu. See BBC website (http://baltimorebirdclub.org/) for all pertinent trip details.

Youth Winter Bird Count. **YMOS**. Dorchester County. Beginning to Advanced. 8 AM to 5:30 PM. The group will meet 8 AM at Sailwinds Center immediately across the Choptank River Bridge in Cambridge. We'll spend time looking at the large array of ducks, before heading south to Blackwater Refuge and Shorter's Wharf to look for Short-eared Owl and the Rough-legged Hawk. Bring a lunch and money for dinner and plenty of warm clothing. Contact George Radcliffe at radclifg@gmail.com for more info and to make a reservation.

Saturday to Monday, February 14 to 16

Anne Arundel. Winter Weekend. Three day trip on the eastern shore to look for winter birds. Locations TBD. Contact Peter Hanan at 301-580-2785 for all trip details. Meet 8 AM at Bay 50 Shopping Center located off Rte 50 on Whitehall Rd.

Carroll. Carroll County Winter Weekend at the Beach. Visit great bird spots such as Bombay Hook, Indian River and Ocean City Inlets, and West Ocean City Pond for winter waterfowl and other winter residents. Meet at the Bombay Hook Visitor's Center at 10 AM on Sat. Leader: Bob Ringler. RSVP to Bob at 410-303-2792 if you plan to attend. Contact Bill Ellis, 443-520-8809 to inquire about sleeping space at his townhouse in Ocean City on Sat and Sun nights.

Frederick. Eastern Shore Weekend Trip. Contact leader, Tom Humphrey at 301-696-8540 for full trip details.

Sunday, February 15

Harford. Loch Raven Reservoir. Explore the beautiful surroundings of Balt's premier watershed for wintering migrant songbirds, waterbirds, and raptors. Meet at the MD 147/152 P&R near Fallston at 7:30 AM. Co-leaders: Dave Larkin, 410-569-8319 or dlarkin@towson.edu and Phil Powers, 410-679-4116 or birdsinmd@verizon.net.

Wednesday, February 18

Meeting. **Anne Arundel**. 7:30 PM at the Blue Heron Center at Quiet Waters Park in Annapolis. "Audubon's Bird Houses, How to Set Up and Cultivate Garden Birds" by *Margaret Barker*, Author. More info: Colin Rees, 410-757-8570 or reescolin@hotmail.com.

Thursday, February 19

Meeting. **Caroline**. Program: Movie Night. Title TBD. 7:30 PM, Caroline Co Public Library, 100 Market St, Denton. Contact Debby Bennett at dabennett1996@gmail.com for more info.

Patuxent. Lake Artemesia (Luther Goldman Birding Trail). Joint trip with PGAS. We will walk the paved trail around the lake as well as the trail through the woods along Indian Creek. Meet 3 PM at the parking lot at Berwyn Rd and Ballew Ave in Berwyn Heights. No reservations needed. Call David Mozurkewich, 301-509-2212 or mozurk@bellAtlantic.net for more info.

Saturday, February 21

Anne Arundel. Fort McHenry/Masonville Cove. A new trip location for AABC which has been popular with Baltimore MOS chapter. Meet 8 AM, location TBD. Contact Linda Vitchock at 410-987-1043 for complete info.

Baltimore. Saturday Monitoring Walks at Fort McHenry. Continuing survey of bird activity at the Fort and wetland. Cancelled in inclement weather. Meet 8 AM in the park, outside the Visitor Center. Leader: Ben Poscover, 410-882-1309.

Harford. Southern NJ/Cape May to Lewes Ferry. Journey to Southern NJ in search of winter residents and strays. The birding trip is free, but the Ferry charges $27 for car and driver plus $8 per additional adult ($51 for a car full of four adults). Contact Russ Kovach at 443-386-4787 or Russell.kovach@gmail.com for add'l info. Meet at 6 AM at the 155/I-95 P&R.

Howard. How to Find an Owl. Meet 1 PM (possibility of birding till dusk) at the Annapolis Rock Rd horse trailer parking lot, midway between Hipsley Mill Rd and Rte 94. Learn how to find owls by habitat and signs. Jay is an expert at finding owls and will share his skills and knowledge as to how to find different species. Contact Jay to sign up so participants can be advised of weather related changes. Our target species are Long-eared, Saw-whet, and other owls. No facilities. Leader: Jay Sheppard, JMSheppar@aol.com (preferred) or 301-725-5559.

Kent. Blackwater NWR. Prime waterfowl and eagle country; pelicans and other surprises. Full day, bring lunch. Meet 8 AM at Dollar General Store parking lot, Chestertown. Leaders: Walter Ellison and Nancy Martin, 410-778-9568 or borealdee@gmail.com.

Patuxent. Governor Bridge NA. Joint trip with PGAS. Habitat includes mature woods along the Patuxent River, brushy fields, and a network of freshwater wetlands, ponds and small streams. Meet 7:30 AM at the parking lot for Governor Bridge NA . No reservations required. The Natural Area is located on the south side of Governor Bridge Rd, approximately 1 mile east of MD 301. If you have questions, contact trip leader Bill Sefton at kiwisuits@msn.com or David Mozurkewich at mozurk@bellAtlantic.net.

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Tuesday, February 24

Meeting. **Washington**. 7 PM Mt. Aetna Nature Center. Program: "Nature Sound Recordings, How and Why" with *Wil Hershberger*. Call 301-797-8454 for details.

Saturday, February 28

Baltimore. Patterson Park. Come see what birding action abounds amid the varied habitats of this green oasis in the middle of Balt. Meet 8 AM at the White House just inside the west edge of the park at intersection of S. Patterson Park Ave and Lombard St. For questions, contact Patterson Park Audubon Center at ppaudubon@gmail.com or 410-558-2473.

Harford. Promenade at Havre De Grace. Meet the leaders at 9 AM at the parking lot for Tydings Park in Havre de Grace for a stroll along the Promenade and waterfront to look for wintering species including ducks, gulls, terns, etc. The walk will be followed by a lunch afterwards at the Laurrapin Grille. Contact Leaders Colleen Webster (410-459-4577 or cwebster@harford.edu) and Sue Procell (410-676-6602 or procell1@comcast.net) ahead of time so they can make lunch reservations.

Patuxent. Eastern Shore/Down the Ocean. Joint trip with PGAS. Day trip to Eastern Shore hotspots, possibly all the way to Ocean City and environs, depending on bird sightings at the time. Focus will be on waterfowl, over-wintering specialties, and rarities. Meet 6:45 AM for carpool departure from the Bowie P&R. Dress warm for possibly blustery conditions; bring lunch and snacks plus scope if you have one. Also bring money for Bay Bridge toll plus possible dinner on return trip. Reservations needed; contact Fred Fallon (fwfallon@ymail.com or 410-286-8152) to make reservations.

Sunday, March 1

Frederick. Woodcock Excursion. Location TBD. Contact leader, David Smith at 410-549-7082 for meet location and time.

Howard. Centennial Park. Meet 8 AM West end parking lot. Easy walking on paved path around Centennial Lake. Woodlands, fields, and water host a wide variety of species. Great view of the sky for flyovers. Early waterfowl, lingering migrants likely. Facilities available. Leader: Jeff Culler, cullersfuls@hotmail.com or 410-465-9006.

Tuesday, March 3

Meeting. **Baltimore**. Tuesday Evening Lecture at Cylburn, 4915 Greenspring Ave. Tonight: Speaker and topic TBA. Doors open at 7 PM for socializing and snacks, show starts about 7:15 PM. Info: Pete Webb, 443-904-6314 or pete_webb@juno.com.

Montgomery. Informal Late Afternoon Walks Until Dusk. Joint MBC/ANS trips. Meet at the end of Seneca Rd at Riley's Lock "on the bridge" at 5 PM. After checking out the river we will proceed to Hughes Hollow. Highlights here will include waterfowl flying into roost. We will try for displaying woodcock if they are in the vicinity. Bring scope, flashlight, and wear "muddy conditions" footwear. Reservations not required. For more info call Jim Green at 301-742-0036 (m) or jkgbirdman53@gmail.com.

Wednesday, March 4

Baltimore. First Wednesdays at Fort McHenry. A continuing series of monthly morning surveys of bird activity at the Fort and wetland. Scope can be useful. Cancelled in inclement weather. Meet 8 AM in the park, outside the Visitor Center. Leader: Mary Chetelat, 410-665-0769.

Meeting. **Carroll**. "Three Centuries of Birds, Artists and Writers Before Audubon" by *Janet Millenson*. 7 PM at the Carroll Nonprofit Center, 255 Clifton Blvd, Westminster. Contact Don Jewell at jewelldg@gmail.com or 410-259-4716 for more info.

Thursday, March 5

Meeting. **Frederick**. Members' Night. This will feature a variety of short presentations of photos, slides, and/or videos from our members. Who knows where it may take us! Please let Tom Humphrey know in advance if you want to be on the agenda. 7 PM at Homewood at Crumland Farms (7407 Willow Rd) in Frederick. For info contact Tom Humphrey, Pres@FrederickBirdClub.org or 301-696-8540.

Patuxent. Lake Artemesia (Luther Goldman Birding Trail). Joint trip with PGAS. We will walk the paved trail around the lake as well as the trail through the woods along Indian Creek. Meet 3 PM at the parking lot at Berwyn Rd and Ballew Ave in Berwyn Heights. No reservations needed. Call David Mozurkewich, 301-509-2212 or mozurk@bellAtlantic.net for more info.

Saturday, March 7

Anne Arundel. Robinson Nature Center. New AABC trip location to a Howard Co park. Meet 4 PM at the Robinson Nature Center. Contact leader, Barbara Johnson at 410-703-4664 for directions and add'l trip details.

Frederick. Frederick County Waterfowl. Visit Frederick Co hotspots in search of lingering waterfowl, including Kershner's Pond. Leader: Mike Welch, 301-685-3561.

Harford. Emory Knoll Farms. This trip offers a great chance to find a variety of late winter/early spring songbirds including Fox Sparrow, Pine warbler and tree sparrow. We will walk the gentle trails for about one mile at a leisurely pace. Meet at the Rtes 165/543 P&R at 8 AM. The leader is Dennis Kirkwood, 410-692-5905 or newarkfarms@gmail.com.

Howard. Waterfowl Search. Meet at Broken Land Pkwy/Rte 32 P&R (West side) at 8 AM. We'll carpool to search the Howard Co waterways for ducks, grebes, mergansers, and loons. Chance of an early migrant. Leader: Kurt Schwarz, 410-461-1643 or krschwa1@verizon.net.

Kent. Chesapeake Farms, Kent County. Wintering waterfowl, raptors, White-crowned and other sparrows. Half day, bring snacks. Meet 8 AM at Dollar General Store parking lot, Chestertown. Leaders: Walter Ellison and Nancy Martin, 410-778-9568

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or borealdee@gmail.com.

MOS. Board Meeting. 10 AM. Hosted by Howard Bird Club. Location TBD. Contact Maryanne Dolan, maryanne.dolan@gmail.com for add'l info.

Patuxent. Fran Uhler NA. Joint trip with PGAS. Habitat includes brushy fields, woods, and hedgerows for a good mix of species. Side trip to freshwater wetland at Horsepen Branch also possible. Meet 7:30 AM at the end of Lemon Bridge Rd off MD 197, just north of Bowie State U. and the MARC line. No reservations required. If you have questions, contact trip leader Bill Sefton at kiwisuits@msn.com or David Mozurkewich at mozurk@bellAtlantic.net for more info.

Sunday, March 8

Baltimore. Marshy Point Nature Center. Half-day trip for waterfowl, raptors, and passerines. Half-mile trail leads to point overlooking Dundee Crk. Boots advisable, scopes useful. Meet 8:30 AM (contact leaders for meet location). Leaders: Brent and Mary Byers, 410-626-7294 or baypuffin@hotmail.com. Remember Daylight Savings Time starts today.

Carroll. Pennsylvania's State Museum. Join us for a visit to Harrisburg to see an exhibit featuring early works by the Father of Ornithology, Alexander Wilson. Meet 11 AM at Don Jewell's house for a light luncheon and then carpool from there. Contact Don at jewelldg@gmail.com or 410-259-4716 if you plan to attend.

Howard. Centennial Park. Meet 8 AM West end parking lot. Easy walking on paved path around Centennial Lake. Woodlands, fields, and water host a wide variety of species. Great view of the sky for flyovers. Early waterfowl, lingering migrants likely. Facilities available. Leaders: Richard and Renee Peters, Richard@rrrrpeters.org. Daylight Savings Time starts (Set clocks ahead).

Workshop continued from page 12

concerning lobbying, e.g. the issue of the pesticide neonics to receive prior attention at MOS and Chapter levels;
MOS to explore options for creating a MOS membership list;
MOS to support the MD Bird Initiative as input into revision of the MD Wildlife Diversity Plan.

MOS Chapters
Chapters to adopt reserves within their county/counties to enhance wildlife protection; and,
Chapters to enhance their websites complementary to that of the MOS

MOS and Chapters
The impact of the pesticide neonics to receive priority attention at MOS and Chapter levels.

It was agreed that a fourth meeting will be held on the 28th March or 4th of April. Date to be confirmed ASAP.

Colin Rees, Anne Arundel Bird Club

Technology for Birding
By Eric Skrzypczak

I came into birding backwards through photography. Digital photography renewed my interest in the hobby about 20 years ago. I wanted to photograph bears, foxes and raccoons. Man stuff. Unfortunately most of the time all I saw was birds. I begrudgingly started snapping a few. At that time I had to ask "nice people with binoculars" what the species was. My photos at that time got a bit more praise than they deserved. Eventually the challenge of trying to get a photo of something that is often not very big, will not let you get close, and which is in almost perpetual motion bit me. So while most birders are now starting to carry cameras as part of their pastime after a lifetime of birding, I learned and did everything backwards.

I am fortunate to have a job that requires me to travel, internationally as well as domestically To list or to not list, that is the question. I started with Avisys as my listing program. At that time I was not too serious about it. Mostly what I saw was a series of Downy Woodpeckers and Chickadees. But I was traveling and I did want to record what my guides showed me. In the last few years I ran into a series of issues with AviSys, and other programs like Bird Brain (for MAC only). First I had to run a separate parallel installation on Windows to use Avisys and both programs supported only Clements.

Support for Clements only might not be a problem for big listers. I'll simply admit that many are far better birders than I am. When I hired guides internationally most of the lists they gave me were in IOC. My list at that time was little more than a list of birds the guide pointed out with an accompanying species name. Recently I came across a free listing program call Scythebill. It runs on Windows, Macs, and Linux. It works great. Entries can be input in either Clements, IOC or both and you can switch input mid-trip. Your trip list can be easily exported for eBird as long as you are very specific about the birding location.

If you were, for example, birding Black Hill Regional Park you would enter that location followed by the City, State and then the fact that it is a park. After that you simply check boxes in a checklist. Importing your data from other programs can be done fairly easily. When I was in South Africa my guide found a real rarity for that area, Pacific Golden Plover. Despite the fact that it is not in the checklist I was able to easily add it by name. The program automatically flagged it as a rarity.

Splits are also easily tracked. If you are very specific about your sighting location when you download the latest version it will take care of any splits. The data file is an external file that can be easily stored in your local documents folder. This program is functionally far easier to use than any other program I have seen. It is hard to believe that it is free. It is worth taking a look at it.

POSTMASTER: TIME-DATED MATERIAL—PLEASE EXPEDITE!

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Anyone is welcome to contribute articles, photos, or ideas that would be of interest to other birders. Copy may be e-mailed to Richard Donham by Jan 25, 2014 for theMar/Apr 2015 issue.

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2015 Hog Island, Maine Scholarships Announced

by: Kate Tufts, Scholarship Chair

The Maryland Ornithological Society is pleased to announce that it is awarding eight scholarships for the 2015 summer ecology and ornithology workshops on beautiful Hog Island, Maine. The camp is operated by the National Audubon Society. This year's award recipients represent six different Maryland counties and a wide range of professional experience from park ranger to school teacher to naturalist and volunteer. Half of them are MOS members.

The ever popular, Sharing Nature: an Educators' Week will be attended by: **Christine Smith**, a Park Naturalist at Cunningham Falls State Park and member of the Frederick Chapter of MOS. Joining Christine will be Peggy Eppig who is the Director of Agriculture and Natural Resources Education with the Maryland Agricultural Education Foundation. Peggy is a member of the Cecil Bird Club. One other awardee looking forward to the Sharing Nature workshop is Jennifer Brown-Whale who is an elementary science teacher with the Howard County Public School System.

The Joy of Birding workshop will be attended **by Gabrielle Cammarata,** an outdoor volunteer and recipient of the Governor's Volunteer Service Award. Also attending will be a Montgomery County Bird Club member and Master Naturalist volunteering at Brookside Gardens, **Carolyn Smith.**

Morgan McGinnity is a Park Naturalist at Watkins Nature Center in Upper Marlboro and works with their birds of prey collection. Morgan will be enrolled, appropriately enough, in the Raptor Rapture session. **Grant Melville,** a Volunteer Education Coordinator at the Ward Museum in Salisbury, has chosen the Maine Seabird and Conservation workshop while **Amy Schoop,** Ranger at Patuxent Research Refuge selected Field Ornithology.

Congratulations to the Hog Island campers of 2015. They have much to look forward to. As one of last year's attendees stated, "From the time I stepped onto that boat I was learning, smiling, excited, full, and in awe. The workshops were incredibly well designed and incredibly fitting for my job speciality." Another commented that Hog Island is every naturalist's dream.